

Current Practices

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) case managers provide one on one orientation with job ready customers. Case managers open a job search component and advise customers to attend the next orientation at Employment Security.

Orientation:

The Employment Security orientation, Crossroads, is presented daily at Employment Security at 2:00 pm. Customers are given an overview of the program and participation requirements.

Customers complete paperwork to update SKIES (Skills, Knowledge, and Information Exchange System.) They are given a portfolio containing schedules for job clubs, the learning center, and are scheduled for workshops. The packet also includes information regarding job search expectations and requirements and a contact log. They are assigned to a specific counselor at this time according to their last name. At this time staff are revising the packet to clarify and simplify some of the information provided.

Customers attend job clubs and go to the learning center until the next workshop begins.

Returners receive the same services as any other customer.

Part-time job search customers are provided the same services as fulltime customers and encouraged to make arrangements to attend the assessment and the job search workshops, whenever possible.

See attached orientation information and job club schedule.

Learning Center:

A unique component of TWI in Aberdeen is the Learning Center. It is staffed by the community college. The CASAS and TABE tests are used to assess the customer's math, reading and writing skills if customers have not yet been to the assessment workshop. Customers with a GED diploma, high school graduates and customers with further education "test out" by taking a test that shows they have the equivalency of 9th grade level skills. Customers work on skills that will bring up their skills up to the 9th grade level and/or prepare them to take the GED tests.

Assessment:

Assessment is done during the weeklong Assessment Workshop. Previously this workshop was named Steps to Success. The community college used to offer a class named Steps to Success and because some customers had taken the college class, the name was changed to avoid any confusion. The Assessment Workshop is offered once every other week. Pesco is the tool used for assessment and is capable of 17 different reports. Selected results are provided to the counselors. The counselors schedule an hour and half appointment following the workshop to discuss the information with the customer. General educational levels, aptitudes, interests, job restrictions, and learning styles are matched to occupations the customer has identified an interest in.

Customers also complete the NW Georgia Career Depot. This assessment addresses many aspects of their life. The results are helpful to staff and customer alike in identifying areas that may require assistance or referrals.

On Thursdays, customers hear from a counselor, the job developer and the WorkFirst coordinator from the community college. At the conclusion of the presentation, customers start work on their Success Plan.

The last activity in the assessment workshop directs each customer to make a lifeline. The lifeline is a map of how to get from where they are today to where they want to go. The lifeline details each little task along the way. Customers are encouraged to outline many steps.

See attached comprehensive assessment report.

Success Plans:

The Success Plan is created after completion of the assessment workshop. Staff stated that they put the plan in the computer using information from the customer. There is no local job match from PESCO. However customers must make a list of twenty employers that may have job openings in the occupation(s) listed on their Success Plan. They use the resource center, phone books, and leads from Ted, the business outreach connection in the Aberdeen office. They may also contact Darrell or Sharon from the Employers Assistance Program (EAP), one of the WorkSource partners, for suggestions. The Success Plan is updated often and provides useful information for both staff and customer.

Job Search Workshop:

The thirty-hour job search workshop alternates with the assessment workshop. The job search workshop provides information needed to complete the job search competencies. If a customer has previously attended the workshop they do not attend again. Instead they go to job clubs, use the resource room or work one on one with their assigned counselor to complete the competencies.

Whenever a customer misses a day of required attendance the counselor calls or sends a letter. Customers are encouraged to complete all of the competency requirements as soon as possible. Staff stated that the required list of employers that match the customer's occupation as stated on the Success Plan is the competency that customers did not complete timely. A new process will be implemented to assist customers to finish this piece more quickly. The connection between the assessment, employment goal and job search is clearly presented and understood by customers.

Competencies:

The competencies in Aberdeen consist of completion of the assessment workshop, success plan, resume, master application, 60-second commercial, recorded mock interview, and list of 20 employers that match the Success Plan occupation(s).

Job Search:

If a customer is scheduled for workshop and do not show, they are rescheduled. Until the workshop is held, the customer is required to do job search as outlined in their IRP. For customers in full time job search, they would be contacting fifteen employers a week, attending job club and going to the learning center until they have not tested out. If customers miss a day of the workshop, they work one on one with their counselor to cover the material and complete the related competency. Staff just made this change to facilitate customers finishing the workshops and competencies more quickly.

Once a customer has completed the workshop(s) and the competencies, they begin contacting employers. Staff and customers look at the type of work the customer is seeking and agree on the number and type i.e. in person, resume, on line, of employer contacts the customer will

make each week. Success Plans are reviewed as close to weekly as possible. If an update is needed, the plan is revised. To receive referrals to local employers, customers are directed to contact Ted Collins, business liaison at the co-located WorkSource. Aberdeen is also part of 7 state Pilot project building employer partnerships.

Job Fairs:

Aberdeen held a Job Fair on April 7th and the following is an excerpt from the Morning News:

“WorkSource Grays Harbor’s Job Fair a Success

More than 500 job seekers and 40 employers braved the winter-like conditions April 1 to attend Job Fair 2003 at Grays Harbor College, according to Job Service Specialist Ted Collins. Local radio station Sunny 102.1 provided timely broadcasts showcasing the employers on hand. Chairperson of the event Julie Skokan said it was one of the best job fairs that she had been associated with. The *Employers’ Evaluation Survey* supports her claim.”

The next hiring event scheduled for May 7, 2003 from 9 am to noon is a “mini” job fair and will feature employers in the hospitality business.

In addition to contacting employers, customers continue to participate in other job search activities in the office including job club, using the resource room and working in the learning center.

Evaluations:

In addition to the weekly reviews, in the fourth, eighth and twelfth week, customers are evaluated using the questions found in CATS. Staff make and document recommendations based on the customers participation. In the eighth week evaluation staff remind customers that they now need to seek and accept any job including those that pay minimum wage. This information was initially given in the orientation. Customers continue to participate in job clubs and use the resource room and learning center.

Surveys:

Customer surveys

Customers attending job clubs completed thirty-seven customer surveys. See attached summary of surveys. Customers only responded 10 times in the “disagree” or “strongly” disagree blocks. Some customers had not yet participated in the assessment workshop. The responses on the right margin were for those that had not worked in that particular area yet, i.e. no success plan or had not used the assessment tool yet.

Staff surveys

Staff stated that they use the Success Plan to assist their customers. Customers are assigned to staff by their last name. Upon completion of the assessment workshop customers are scheduled for an hour and half appointment with their counselor. The results of the assessment workshop are reviewed. Counselors receive a folder for each customer from the facilitator of the Assessment workshop. The folder includes results from PESCO that gives information on educational levels, learning styles and areas of interest with specific occupations listed. They also look at the results of the NW Georgia Depot. This assessment addresses many aspects of their life and are helpful to staff and customer alike in identifying areas that may require assistance or referrals. After reviewing all information with the customer, staff creates the Success Plan as directed by the customer.

Staff stated that they want to continue to use PESCO. Staff stated that PESCO provides useful information to both staff and the customer. Staff stated that at this time PESCO testing

does not cost WorkFirst. The Workforce Delivery Area provides it free because they share the customers. The WorkFirst customers are eligible for Intensive Services from the WDA.

Staff found the evaluation tools very helpful. They suggested that the 8-week evaluation have a question that addresses advising the customer to now seek and accept any work including minimum wage jobs. They also asked for separate completion dates for each competency. Another field staff would like to see is a date for the job search workshop completion.

Business surveys were not given out. Staff and the business liaison stated that businesses do not know, and they do not want businesses to know, what program a referral comes from. However, the business liaison stated that he has seen changes in the customers he is referring. He says they are more focused on their occupation and hears that they feel they have more choices.

Best Practices:

Staff stated that customers are delighted with the assessment workshop. See attachment with comments from the Assessment Workshop evaluations. Customers are staying in the workshop for the duration. On Thursdays in the workshop, customers hear from the job developer, a counselor and a community college representative. The customers continuing job search start their Success Plan and later sit down with a job counselor and are given enough time to do an individualized Success Plan.

Ted Collins, Aberdeen's marketing representative and job developer interacts with the customers during the job search workshop and has individual appointments with customers to link customers to local employers. Ted is also part of a 7 state business pilot to market customers.

Concerns:

Both staff and the supervisor stated they would like to be able to have the assessment workshop every week. To do so, WorkFirst would need another room and more computers and the community college would need to provide a staff person.

They would like to have the ability to have weekly assessment workshops because at this time they have to delay some customers. The workshop held during the week of this visit had to turn away nine customers. These customers will have to wait two weeks for the next Assessment Workshop and will not be able to complete the assessment in the required 15 days.

Changes to TWI implementation Plan:

The orientation name was changed from Nuts and Bolts to Crossroads and the Assessment Workshop was originally named Steps to Success.

The office has changed how they handle scheduling customers for workshops. If a customer says they cannot make the job search workshop due to a scheduled appointment, they are scheduled with their counselor to cover the information one on one. They hope this will help customers complete their competencies more quickly.

Staff also decided to ask for the required list of employers matching the occupation as listed on their Success Plan as part of their job search log. In the past this piece is what kept customers from completing the competencies timely.

Partner Involvement:

Sandy Jsames from the Department of Social and Health Services will visit Aberdeen. The date has not yet been determined.

Bruce Lund from Community Trade and Economic Development was on site April 30th. He spoke with Ted Collins and the WorkFirst staff. Have not heard or received results of his visit at this time.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges indicated they would conduct a telephone survey with their staff. Staff from the community college conducts the assessment workshop and jobs clubs and staffs the learning center. To date have not heard or received any results of this survey.

Statistical Rollup:

An Adhoc report was done on April 23rd. Aberdeen had 791 customers with an open component. Of this 701 86 were in JS, 64 fulltime. See attached summary for more details.

TWI Case Record Review:

Total active customers in JS on 4/23/03 were 86. 10 records were reviewed. See attachment for complete report.

The last table on the attachment includes customers listed in CATS that would be in their 6th week next week.

Aberdeen added another requirement to complete the competencies. The customer must provide a list of local employers that match the occupation stated in the customer's Success Plan. While Aberdeen has added this module, in addition to the basic competencies listed in the initial guidelines, customers must still complete all competencies within four weeks. Staff changed procedures to assist more customers in completing competencies within the time limit.

The Assessment Workshop is only given every other week in Aberdeen. Only 20 students can attend any session due to size of the room and computers available to do PESCO. The office must postpone the workshop for some customers when more than 20 show up. In the past staff overbooked for workshop, knowing that some would not show. However, the no show rate has decreased dramatically and most customers are now showing up.

Success Plans are completed for most customers. Staff create them and update them about every week or so. The information entered by staff is based on customer provided information. Originally information may state what workshops to attend and when. Later the plan states the number and what type of employer contacts to be made. This number is determined by the occupation the customer has chosen. If the customer has other needs they are also listed. Examples are: Pass typing test, take GED test, work in the Learning Center, contact a doctor, etc.

Customer Engagement:

Records do document non-participation and document the reason for referring customers back to DSHS.